CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for blocking the development or treating or reducing the severity or effects of an immunological disorder in an animal comprising the step of administering a pharmaceutical composition which comprises a therapeutically effective amount of a TWEAK blocking agent and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

2. A method for inhibiting an immune response in an animal comprising the step of administering a pharmaceutical composition which comprises an effective amount of a TWEAK blocking agent and a pharmaceutically effective carrier.

3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent is selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an antibody directed against the TWEAK ligand;
(b) an antibody directed against the TWEAK receptor;
(c) an agent that modifies the binding of the TWEAK ligand to the receptor;
(d) an agent that modifies the cell surface receptor clustering; and
(e) an agent that can interrupt the intra cellular signaling of the TWEAK receptor.

4. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the animal is mammalian.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the mammal is human.

6. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent comprises a soluble TWEAK receptor having a ligand binding domain that can selectively bind to a surface TWEAK ligand.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the soluble TWEAK receptor comprises a human immunoglobulin IgG domain.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the human immunoglobulin IgG domain comprises regions responsible for specific antigen binding.

9. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the antibody directed against the TWEAK receptor comprises a monoclonal antibody.

10. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent comprises a monoclonal antibody directed against the TWEAK surface ligand.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the antibody is directed against a subunit of the TWEAK ligand.

12. The method according to claim 2, wherein the immune response is a Th1 cell-mediated immune response.

13. The method according to claim 2, wherein the immune response is a Th2 cell-mediated immune response.

14. The method according to claim 2, wherein the immune response includes both a Th1 and a Th2 cell-mediated immune response.

15. The method according to claim 2, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent comprises a monoclonal antibody directed against the TWEAK receptor.

16. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a TWEAK blocking agent and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

17. The composition according to claim 16, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent is selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an antibody directed against the TWEAK ligand;
(b) an antibody directed against the TWEAK receptor;
(c) an agent that modifies the binding of the TWEAK ligand to the receptor;
(d) an agent that modifies the cell surface receptor clustering; and
(e) an agent that can interrupt the intracellular signaling of the TWEAK receptor

18. The composition according to claim 16, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent comprises a soluble TWEAK receptor having a ligand binding domain that can selectively bind to a surface TWEAK ligand.

19. The composition according to claim 18, wherein the soluble TWEAK receptor comprises a human immunoglobulin IgG domain into which regions responsible for specific antigen binding have been inserted.

20. The composition of claim 16, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent comprises a monoclonal antibody directed against the TWEAK receptor.

21. The composition according to claim 16, wherein the TWEAK blocking agent comprises a monoclonal antibody directed against the TWEAK surface ligand.

22. The composition according to claim 21, wherein the antibody is directed against a subunit of the TWEAK ligand.